



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 371

January Session, 2003

Substitute House Bill No. 6207

House of Representatives, April 15, 2003

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. COCCO of the 127th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ALLOWING THE USE OF FLASHING RED OR WHITE LIGHTS ON MOTOR VEHICLES OF FIRE CHIEFS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 14-96p of the
2 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
3 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

4 (3) A vehicle being operated by the chief executive officer of an
5 emergency medical service organization, as defined in section 19a-175,
6 an ambulance, as defined in section 19a-175, a vehicle being operated
7 by a local fire marshal or a local director of emergency management
8 may use a flashing red light or lights or flashing white head lamps and
9 a flashing amber light while on the way to the scene of an emergency,
10 except that an ambulance may use flashing lights of other colors
11 specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of such vehicle.
12 The chief executive officer of each such organization shall provide
13 annually during the month of January, on forms provided by the

14 commissioner, such officer's name and address and the registration
15 number on the number plate or plates of the vehicle on which the
16 authorized red light is or white head lamps and amber light are to be
17 used. A vehicle being operated by a member of a volunteer fire
18 department or company or a volunteer emergency medical technician
19 may use flashing white head lamps, provided such member or
20 emergency medical technician is on the way to the scene of a fire or
21 medical emergency and has received written authorization from the
22 chief law enforcement officer of the municipality to use such head
23 lamps. Such head lamps shall only be used within the municipality
24 granting such authorization or from a personal residence or place of
25 employment, if located in an adjoining municipality. Such
26 authorization may be revoked for use of such head lamps in violation
27 of this subdivision. A vehicle being operated by paid and volunteer
28 fire chiefs, their first and second deputies, or their first and second
29 assistants should there be no deputies, may use flashing red lights, in
30 conjunction with a siren, provided said fire chiefs, deputies or
31 assistants are on the way to the scene of a fire or medical emergency.

32 Sec. 2. Subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of section 14-96p of the
33 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
34 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

35 (4) Flashing or revolving white lights may not be displayed upon a
36 motor vehicle except (A) on fire emergency apparatus, (B) on motor
37 vehicles of paid and volunteer fire chiefs and their first and second
38 deputies or their first and second assistants should there be no
39 deputies, and, if the fire chiefs, deputies or assistants are on the way to
40 the scene of a fire or medical emergency, said lights may be used in
41 conjunction with a siren, (C) as a means of indicating a right or left
42 turn, (D) in conjunction with flashing red lights on an ambulance
43 responding to an emergency call, or (E) on the top rear of any school
44 bus. For the purpose of this subsection, the term "handicapped
45 students" means mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech-
46 impaired, visually handicapped, emotionally disturbed, orthopedically
47 impaired or other health-impaired students, or students with specific

48 learning disabilities, who by reason thereof, require special education
49 and related services; and the term "flashing white lights" shall not
50 include the simultaneous flashing of head lamps.

51 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 14-96q of the general statutes is
52 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
53 *October 1, 2003*):

54 (c) Flashing lights are prohibited on motor vehicles other than
55 school buses, except (1) as a means for indicating a right or left turn, (2)
56 flashing blue lights used by members of volunteer or civil
57 preparedness fire companies, as provided by subsection (b) of section
58 14-96p, (3) on certain emergency and maintenance vehicles by written
59 permit from the commissioner, (4) flashing or revolving yellow lights
60 on (A) wreckers registered pursuant to section 14-66, or (B) vehicles of
61 carriers in rural mail-delivery service or vehicles transporting or
62 escorting any vehicle or load or combinations of vehicles or vehicles
63 and load which is or are either oversize or overweight, or both, and
64 operated or traveling under a permit issued by the Commissioner of
65 Transportation pursuant to section 14-270, (5) flashing red lights (A) on
66 a motor vehicle accommodating fifteen or fewer handicapped students
67 used only during the time such vehicle is stopped for the purpose of
68 receiving or discharging such handicapped students, (B) used by
69 members of the fire police on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal
70 during traffic directing operations at the scene of a fire, (C) on rescue
71 vehicles, (D) used by chief executive officers of emergency medical
72 service organizations as provided in subsection (a) of section 14-96p, as
73 amended by this act, (E) ambulances, as defined in section 19a-175, or
74 (F) used by local fire marshals or directors of emergency management,
75 (6) flashing green lights used by members of volunteer ambulance
76 associations or companies as provided in subsection (c) of section
77 14-96p, [or] (7) flashing white lights or flashing lights of other colors
78 specified by federal requirements for the manufacture of an ambulance
79 used in conjunction with flashing red lights or flashing head lamps
80 and a flashing amber light on an ambulance responding to an
81 emergency call, or (8) flashing red or flashing white lights used by paid

82 and volunteer fire chiefs and their first and second deputies or their
 83 first and second assistants should there be no deputies. The
 84 prohibitions in this section shall not prevent the operator of a motor
 85 vehicle who while traveling on a limited access divided highway,
 86 because of the grade, is unable to maintain the minimum speed of
 87 forty miles per hour, or who while traveling on any other highway is
 88 operating such motor vehicle at such slow speed as to obstruct or
 89 endanger following traffic, or the operator of a disabled vehicle
 90 stopped on a hazardous location on the highway, or in close proximity
 91 thereto, from flashing lights, installed on the vehicle primarily for
 92 other purposes, in any manner that the operator selects so as to
 93 indicate that such vehicle is traveling slowly, obstructing traffic or is
 94 disabled and is a hazard to be avoided. The commissioner is
 95 authorized, at such commissioner's discretion, to issue special permits
 96 for the use of flashing or revolving lights on emergency vehicles, on
 97 escort vehicles and on maintenance vehicles, provided any person,
 98 firm or corporation other than the state or any metropolitan district,
 99 town, city or borough shall pay an annual permit fee of two dollars for
 100 each such vehicle, provided vehicles not registered in this state used
 101 for transporting or escorting any vehicle or load or combinations of
 102 vehicles or vehicles and load which is or are either oversize or
 103 overweight, or both, when operating under a permit issued by the
 104 Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to section 14-270, shall not
 105 require such permit. On and after July 1, 1985, such annual permit fee
 106 shall be three dollars, on and after July 1, 1989, four dollars and fifty
 107 cents, on and after July 1, 1991, five dollars and seventy-five cents and
 108 on and after July 1, 1993, seven dollars.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2003</i>

TRA *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Type	FY 04 \$	FY 05 \$
Motor Vehicle Dept.	TF - None	None	None

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill codifies current practice of allowing fire chiefs and their first and second deputies or assistants to display flashing red and white lights on the way to the scene of an emergency. These individuals are currently required to obtain \$7 permits; and they will be required to continue obtaining these permits.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6207

AN ACT ALLOWING THE USE OF FLASHING RED OR WHITE LIGHTS ON MOTOR VEHICLES OF FIRE CHIEFS**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes a vehicle operated by paid and volunteer fire chiefs, their first and second deputies, or their first and second assistants if there are no deputies, to use flashing red lights or flashing or revolving white lights, or both if (1) the vehicle is on the way to a fire or medical emergency scene and (2) a siren is also used.

By law, use of any flashing lights on a motor vehicle is prohibited unless specifically authorized as an exemption. The law provides (1) broad exemptions for things like indicating turns or using a vehicle's hazard flashers when appropriate and (2) vehicle-specific authorizations for both type and color of light. The motor vehicle commissioner issues the permits required for vehicle-specific flashing light authorizations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2003

BACKGROUND***Related Bill***

SB 961, also favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, expands the current authorization for the chief executive officer of an emergency medical service organization to use flashing red lights or flashing white headlamps and a flashing amber light while on the way to an emergency to include any vehicle operated by a licensed or certified ambulance service to transport personnel to emergencies.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 25 Nay 1

